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"The American Ambulance Association promotes health care policies that ensure excellence in the ambulance service industry and provides research, education, and communications programs to enable members to effectively address the needs of the communities they serve."

November 19, 2003

The Honorable Bill Thomas
Chairman
Committee on Ways and Means
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Grassley
Chairman
Committee on Finance
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Thomas and Vice Chairman Grassley:

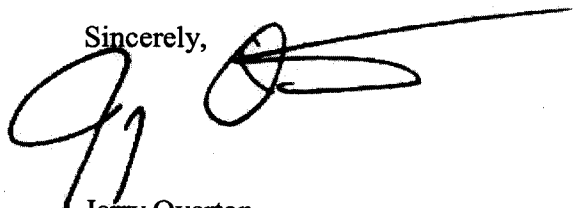
The American Ambulance Association (AAA) greatly appreciates that conferees included desperately needed relief to ambulance service providers in the Medicare prescription drug and modernization bill. Ambulance service providers on average are reimbursed substantially below the cost of providing services to Medicare patients. This is having a devastating financial impact on the ability of many ambulance service providers to adequately serve their communities.

The AAA represents ambulance service providers who furnish vital emergency and non-emergency ambulance services across the United States. The AAA is composed of public, private, municipal, and fire department and hospital-based ambulance services.

The relief included in the Medicare bill is a very important step toward addressing the revenue shortfall arising from the Medicare ambulance fee schedule. The AAA therefore formally supports the ambulance provisions and looks forward to the enactment of the Medicare prescription drug and modernization bill. As the new fee schedule is further implemented, we pledge to continue to work with the Congress and the Administration to ensure that all ambulance service providers are equitably reimbursed for the vital services they provide Medicare patients and their communities.

We greatly appreciate your efforts and the recognition of the conferees for ensuring that Medicare patients receive the high quality of ambulance services they deserve.

Sincerely,



Jerry Overton
President